

ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ

hoc est,

DE HOMINIS

PERFECTIONE ANI-
MO ET IN PRIMIS ORTU HU-
jus, commentationes ac disputationes quorun-
dam Theologorum & Philosophorum no-
stræ ætatis, quos vetta pagina

REBEL PATHOLOGIES: FROM POLITICS TO PSYCHOLOGISATION...AND BACK.

Mihalis Mentinis

Introduction

In a text entitled ‘The revolutionary psychology of Lev Davidovich Bronstein’, Parker (1996) argues that revolutionary psychology should not be regarded as an ‘academic system of knowledge’, a ‘theory or set of theories’, nor can it be ‘formalised, written, transmitted and learnt’. A revolutionary psychology, rather, he goes on, “can only be *lived*, and as a process of personal engagement, of political action” (p.184). Parker, then, proceeding with his précis of Bronstein’s (alias Leon Trotsky) life, arrives at the conclusion that any “worthwhile and progressive psychology must take the form of biography” (p. 193), which provides us with examples for adopting forms of action. Perhaps in an attempt to avoid formalisation, however, Parker pays scarce, if any, attention to what these ‘forms of action,’ as he refers to them, really are, and the very adjective that is supposed to give meaning to such psychology is poorly discussed. Even though the text is about Leon Trotsky — leaving no doubt as to what the author wants to convey— its overall tone

is somewhat timid, and, more troublingly, it is marked by a problematic tendency towards trivialising the word ‘revolutionary’, reducing it to any kind of progressive, leftist personal engagement with politics. It is my contention, then, that in times in which products ranging from washing powders to electronic gadgets are advertised as ‘revolutionary’ or as ‘bringing a revolution’ (in cleaning, in entertainment and so on), and in which charity oriented humanitarian subjectivities and eco-friendly lifestyles are characterised as progressive, or even radical, we must stress that if such a thing as ‘revolutionary psychology’ exists, it can never be simply a marketing label for interesting life-stories, unconventional ways of life, and humanitarian attitudes, no matter how progressive these are. Whilst, admittedly, interesting lives and certain kinds of positioning towards social and political issues can, of course, contain progressive, and even radical elements, this in itself does not qualify them as examples of revolutionary psychology.

Another substantial problem with Parker’s approach –at least my own particular reading of it- is that his revolutionary psychology could be read as being the invention or creation of a ‘great’ man’s life of political action who then bequeaths his experience and theoretical insights to his followers and future generations as ‘forms of action’. Hence, despite his own monition against resurrecting the cult of the personality, and warnings against lapsing into the reductionism of bourgeois psychology, Parker’s approach, as it stands, runs the risk of dragging us as far back as the very beginnings of bourgeoisie psychology, with the Puritan analysis of inclinations and individual talents (see Federici, 2004). Furthermore, Parker’s assertion that any revolutionary psychology must take the form of biography also runs the danger of psychologisation, for biography— as an account of an individual life— always entails a certain degree of psychologisation. Consequently, I propose abandoning the term ‘biography’ altogether in our discussions of revolutionary psychology, and, in its place, adopting the admittedly clichéd term- although significant nonetheless for differentiation purposes- ‘anti-biography’.¹ An anti-biography would focus, not on the individual life itself, but on the repertoires of revolutionary engagement and action within which the life of an individual unfolds. Revolutionary psychology, then, becomes the individual unfolding within, and in relation to, revolutionary repertoires of action; such forms of action are not the inventions of ‘great’ individuals endowed with talents, creativity, intelligence, and extra psychological resources, but, rather, historically, po-

¹ The term ‘anti-biography’, as Psaroudakis (personal communication) suggests, is not an adequate term either for it stills refers to the realm of the psychologised personal biography. We need, then, an altogether different word in order to convey and discuss the individual-repertoire relationship. For lack of a better term I maintain the term ‘anti-biography’ only provisionally.

litically, and collectively constructed forms of personal engagement with class struggle, with a clear aspiration to nothing less than communism.

Drawing upon the revolutionary trajectory of the spokesperson and military commander of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN), subcomandante Marcos: what I will attempt to demonstrate is that biographical approaches to Marcos are precisely what have allowed anti-Zapatista bourgeois psychologists, as well as pro-Marcos commentators, to psychologise his political involvement, thus rendering the main revolutionary repertoire within which he unfolded his personal trajectory invisible as such, in turn, reducing it to the pathological personal choice of a single individual. Before discussing the obscure workings of rebel psychologisation and pathologisation in detail, I will first present an excursus of the revolutionary repertoire in question: a repertoire that defines — albeit in an open, and constantly changing form— a certain relationship between radical intellectuals and the subaltern. Despite the fact that this is by no means a repertoire exclusive to Latin America— in actuality it can take multiple forms— for the sake of brevity I will discuss it solely in its Latin American specificity, and most radical form. It is important to explicitly state that this is a Marxist repertoire. Even though its historical origins and development precede Marx himself, I take Marxism to be “an accumulating tradition of practical revolutionary knowledge that stretches in time from before Marx to our times” (Parker, 1996:184). To set out, we need to jump, for a while, on Columbus’s caravel sailing amidst ‘the Tempest’.

Ariel and Caliban: a revolutionary repertoire

In the *Diario de Navegación* ('Navigation Log Books') of Columbus, we have the first European accounts of the ferocious *Carib* Indians who ruthlessly fought the Spaniards upon the latter’s arrival to the continent. On Sunday 4 November 1492, less than a month after Columbus’s arrival, we read the following entry: “...he learnt also that far from the place there were men with one eye and others with dogs’ muzzles, who ate human beings”, and then again on 23 November: “...which they said was very large [the island of Haiti] and that on it lived people who had only one eye and others called cannibals, of whom they seemed to be very afraid”(quoted in Fernández Retamar, 1974, p.11-12). On 11 December, of the same year, it is noted that *Caniba* refers in fact to the people of El Gran Can —which explains the deformation undergone by the name *Carib*— also used by Columbus (ibid). In Columbus’s diaries the ferocious *Caribs*, or *Canibas*, are contrasted with the submissive and meek *Araucos*. This early binary representation of the natives— reproduced and given further dimensions by the Spanish Crown’s *Requerimiento*, which demanded the Indians make a choice between submission and life, or resistance and death

(see Saldaña Portillo, 2003) — is also found in Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest*. Within this play, Caliban (Shakespeare's anagram for 'cannibal') and Ariel (probably a corruption of the name 'Arauco') are two figures that are enslaved and robbed of their island by Prospero (the letters can be rearranged to spell out 'Oppressor'), a foreign conqueror. Even though both figures are native to the island and oppressed by Prospero, they nevertheless develop a very distinct relationship to their master. Unlike the submissive and obedient Ariel who binds himself to the master, Caliban is portrayed as brutish, vulgar, and unconquered. In contrast to Ariel's self-effacing willingness to serve Prospero, Caliban displays a sardonic and audacious rebelliousness against his master (see O'Toole, n.d.a.). We should note, in passing, that writing 'the Tempest' in the early 17th century, Shakespeare's portrayal of Caliban reflects the epochal panic with the proletarians' unruliness and refusal of wage-labour. Primitive accumulation demanded the discipline of the Caliban-proletarians, who, as Federici (2004) argues, preferred to risk the gallows than submit to the new conditions of work.

Amidst debates concerning the nature of the population in the early 19th century, both Shakespearean characters (i.e. Ariel and Caliban) were introduced within Latin America. Rather than simply reproducing Shakespearean representations, however, literature has been highly polemical as to which character the Latin American population should identify with. On the one hand, writers of pro-colonial persuasions have preferred the more docile Ariel to the vexed Caliban—the latter being represented as an uncivilised savage in need of discipline and education; on the other hand, anti-colonial writers have opted for Caliban's turbulent and unruly spirit, as the subject of the struggle against colonialism, imperialism, and military dictatorships. For certain writers within this latter group— such as, for example, Fernández Retamar, whom I will discuss forthcoming— Ariel has been identified with the figure of the intellectuals— at least those radical intellectuals who have not submitted completely to the master— and his task identified as that of the vanguard of the Caliban-proletarian struggle. The seeds for such a re-working of the Caliban-Ariel relationship are found in Marx and Engels's 'Manifesto of the Communist Party':

“In times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour....a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift and joins the revolutionary class... and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole” (Marx & Engels, 1848, Chapter 1, n.p.a.)

Though it is beyond the scope of the current article to go into a detailed excursus of the various forms the debate concerning the relationship between Ariel and Calibans took in Latin America, suffice to say, it took many different directions: often prioritising the 'Caliban' qualities of the working class, to the exclusion of the indigenous populations from any revolutionary capacity of their own; in conjunction with the assignment of a series of

different missions and levels of commitment to radical intellectuals. Indicatively, following the post- Second World War developmentalist discourse that defined a certain relationship between the 'underdeveloped third world' and the developed countries— mainly the US— revolutionaries, such as Che Guevara and Mario Payeras, conceptualised the relationship between the peasants, and/or indigenous, and revolution as one of progression from pre-modern forms of life to a developed modern stage. The role of the radical intellectual, then, was as the facilitator and guide of this developmental process (see Saldaña Portillo, 2003). In other cases, the Ariel-Caliban repertoire received a religious tinge, sometimes a particularly strong one, due to the influence of liberation theology and the involvement of priests and catechists within the armed revolutionary struggle. In general terms, the Cuban Revolution was a hallmark for the development of the Ariel-Caliban repertoire in its most radical form. After the Cuban revolution, Miller (1999) argues— albeit in an exaggerated way: "it was no longer plausible for intellectuals to say, as Vallejo had done in the 1920s, 'as a man, I am a revolutionary, but as a poet, I am a free spirit'" (p.125). This statement, however, holds only partly true, since things seem to have been more complicated. By the end of the 1960s, in the aftermath of the so-called 'Padilla affair' — named after the Cuban poet who was arrested and eventually imprisoned for openly criticising the Castro regime— and in the shadow of Castro's doctrine, expressed in his speech to the intellectuals in Havana: 'within the Revolution everything, against the Revolution, nothing' (Castro, 1961, p.6), intellectuals in Latin America started taking different positions towards the Cuban Revolution and communism. Schematically, three main groups formed. Firstly, those who continued to wholeheartedly support the Castro regime: writers such as the Cuban Fernández Retamar and the Uruguayan Mario Benedetti, whose ideas represented what we can call the pro-Cuban orthodoxy. The second group consisted of those intellectuals who had grown critical of, and even hostile towards, the Cuban regime, eventually distancing themselves from Marxism in general: here we find novelists such as the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa and the Mexican Carlos Fuentes. In the third group, we find such writers as the Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano and the Argentinean Julio Cortázar, who displayed an unorthodox, promethean thinking, strongly opposing the putative inseparability between social realism and socialism maintained by the first group, but, nevertheless, remaining loyal to Cuba and socialism throughout the 1970s and 1980s (see Stabb, 1994). In its most radical form, the repertoire we discuss here was highly influenced by Che Guevara's total commitment to revolution, and was supported by the intellectuals of the first group.

In a hugely influential text for those generations of intellectual revolutionaries across Latin America between the 1970's and 1980's, Fernández Retamar took the discussion on Ariel and Caliban to critical point, identifying Latin American culture, not with the airy and intellectual Ariel, but with the ferocious, unconquerable Caliban: "what is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?" (1974: 24). However,

Fernández Retamar argues that there is no real Ariel-Caliban polarity: both are inhabitants of the island and slaves of Prospero, the foreign magician. Ariel is the intellectual from the same island as Caliban, and it is he (not she) who has to make the choice of either serving Prospero— for which, Retamar argues, Ariel is particularly adept— or allying himself with Caliban in the struggle for ‘true freedom’. It is at this precise point that Retamar adds further to the radicality of the repertoire of the *intellectual comprometido* (‘committed intellectual’), for he argues that:

here that “sector of bourgeois ideologists” to which Marx and Engels refer experience a second form of rupture: except for that sector proceeding organically from the exploited classes, the intelligentsia which considers itself revolutionary must break all ties with its class of origin (frequently the petite-bourgeoisie) and must besides sever the nexus of dependence upon the metropolitan culture from which it has learnt, nonetheless, a language as well as a conceptual and technical apparatus. That language will be of profit, to use Shakespearean terminology, in cursing Prospero (1974: 63).²

It was this rupture from the metropolitan culture, in all its dimensions, and taken to its most extreme, that the first generation of the non-indigenous Zapatista militants in the 1970’s and the second generation of the 1980’s— including Marcos— would perform (see Mentinis, 2006). As Marcos (1994) asserts—in doing so, invoking a notion of authenticity likely inspired by Sartre— it was a total rupture that “meant abandoning everything, everything, everything in every sense: name, family, prestige, future, adulation. It meant starting over again, being another person, someone who is authentic” (n.p.a). Departing from the developmentalist discourse of Payeras and Che Guevara, and in contradistinction to the authoritarian leadership of the latter, what these militants ultimately added to the Ariel-Caliban repertoire was a re-thinking and renegotiation of the relationship between the indigenous population and the radical intellectuals, thus producing in the Jungle of Chiapas a relatively anti-hierarchical— at least in comparison to previous experience— ‘Zone of Proletarian Development’ (see Shah-Shuja, 2008). Furthermore, within Zapatista-Marcos’s writings, post-1994, there is a marked attempt to bring together the revolutionary commitment of the aforementioned first group of radical writers with the open, creative (even surrealist), and non-dogmatic thinking of the writers of the third group— Marcos was, after all, an incessant reader of Julio Cortázar. Thus, with the Zapatistas, Ariel

² Jan De Vos has brought my attention to the fact that this language includes the language of psychology too. We should consider, thus, that Caliban’s relation to Prospero’s language cannot be as simple as Fernández Retamar sees it to be, and Caliban has to sever his dependence upon Prospero’s language too.

gradually begins to lose his/her vanguard position and is embedded in Caliban's struggle in a different way from that espoused by many revolutionaries of the 1960's and 1970's.³

Having concluded this excruciatingly concise excursus of the revolutionary repertoire defining a certain relationship between radical (bourgeois) intellectuals and the subaltern, so as to attempt to extend Parker's (1996) notion of revolutionary psychology and move away from strictly biographical approaches, I will at this juncture proceed to discuss two forms of psychologisation which presuppose and reproduce certain forms of psychology (see Parker, 2008). The first form corresponds roughly to the anti-Zapatista commentators and bourgeois psychologists, and explicitly employs a mainstream psychological discourse that aims at both Marcos's and Marxism's pathologisation. The second form—which corresponds to some Leftist pro-Zapatista commentators—does not employ any kind of explicit psychological discourse, but, rather, constitutes a discursive practice which reproduces versions of mainstream psychology and selfhood that disable radical politics.

Psychologisation I: the brilliant imposture

The initial military reaction to the Zapatista rebellion by the Mexican state was accompanied by a parallel attempt to criminalise the leadership of the EZLN and Marcos. When criminalisation failed, a number of bourgeois and state experts— from communication analysts to historians— undertook the task of 'unmasking' Marcos, demonstrating how behind the rebel persona lurked a demagogue, and manipulator of the indigenous people; a violent, dishonest figure who put his personal interest and obsession for publicity and fame before the very lives of the indigenous populations, on whose behalf he hypocritically claimed to speak. De La Grange and Rico (1997), in their biography of Marcos, were more than clear in their anti-Marcos delirium, brandishing him a *genial impostura* ('brilliant Imposture'). As a discursive practice, the endeavour to morally annihilate Marcos was informed by, and reproduced, a very particular form of psychology (see Parker 2008). This form of psychology involved a certain conception of selfhood, which following Shah-Shuja (2010), can be termed the 'divided bourgeois self'. It was precisely this artificial and simplistic separation of an external aspect of Marcos's self (identity), and a private aspect of his self (subjectivity), that allowed the former to be presented as the false

³ Interestingly enough, in one of the latest taking ups of the Caliban figure, Hardt and Negri (2009) celebrate the latter's revolutionary force but say nothing about his past, present or future relationship to Ariel.

façade of an obscure and pathological subjectivity. It comes as no surprise, then, that mainstream bourgeois psy-experts, of all specialisations (psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and graphologists), had a privileged and prominent position within this systematised, ideological practice.

Psychology, as a mechanism of the constituted power (see Negri, 1999), was further employed to set limits to the Zapatista demands. A Mexican bourgeois psychiatrist argued, for instance, that if Marcos insisted in his unrealistic demands, all he would be demonstrating was his ‘pathological narcissism’ (see: Santamaría, 1998). Eventually, even his signature became an object of graphological analysis: one more pseudo-scientific method through which to ostensibly penetrate into the deepest layers of his ‘personality’, and reveal the ‘psychological portrait’ of the perverse *pasamontañas*. ‘Who is Marcos?’ pondered one author of an article in a Mexican weekly in the immediate aftermath of the revolt. The analysis of his signature betrays the ‘truth’ about the masked impostor: a man with “exhibitionist tendencies, feelings of shame of his own sexuality, tendencies for violent and inappropriate outbursts” (Hernández, 1994: 20). Such references and allusions towards a weak sexuality— or even a kind of hidden, repressed homosexuality— concerning an exhibitionist nature, and predisposition towards inappropriate violent outbursts, portrayed Marcos as a culturally specific, neurotic, crypto-homosexual— thus, pathologising him within the borders of a culture that gave meaning to the word ‘macho’. However, it was a strategy that had grander designs than Marcos’s mere pathologisation: it was also geared towards the breaking of the ariel-caliban ties, targeting all those who dared to show solidarity with the Zapatista cause; those whom one right-wing commentator accused of suffering from ‘political immaturity’— the ‘global-idiots’ or ‘idiots without borders’ (Montaner, 2001).

As aforementioned, the psychologisation and eventual pathologisation of Marcos aimed at something broader and more insidious than simply annihilating him morally and symbolically: it sought, rather, to present his involvement within revolutionary politics as a mere function of his pathological character, in turn, rendering invisible the fact that Marcos— like all non-indigenous Zapatista militants— was operating within a historically and politically constituted repertoire. There was one further direction taken that aimed to have precisely the opposite effect: this practice sought to demonstrate that Marcos was something akin to a case study, one which demonstrated the psychologically problematic nature of the repertoire in question. It is this latter practice which I will now discuss further.

Marcos’s decision to engage with the most radical form of the Ariel-Caliban repertoire entailed, among other ruptures, a break with his own family. In the ten years prior to the Zapatista uprising, he and the other non-indigenous militants would rarely, if ever, return to their homes. When Andres Oppenheimer (1998) —a co-winner of the Pulitzer prize—

touches upon Marcos's relation to his family, he makes the following interesting observation:

as if confirming psychologists' family constellation theories, according to which the middle children are the most psychologically troubled ones, Rafael⁴—the fourth of Don Alfonso's eight children— seemed eager to find a political justification for breaking with his parents (1998: 252).

This is an extraordinarily interesting comment: in part, because it contains a number of arbitrary assumptions which take us beyond the realm of mere psychologisation of Marcos as a psychologically troubled individual. Firstly, there is a peculiar, causal relation established between being 'psychologically troubled' and wanting to break from one's family. Why does Oppenheimer— a laureate journalist, no less— consider the former as categorically leading to the latter? Such a causal relation reaches the point of absurdity when one considers Oppenheimer's contention that, in order to produce this break the psychologically troubled person is in need of a 'political justification'. It would be remiss not to logically cogitate over what such a political justification would actually entail; Oppenheimer's own retort consists of quoting an excerpt from the chapter entitled 'the family' from Rafael Guillén's (alias Marcos) graduate thesis: "as a unity of consumption and reproduction of the labour force, the family in the capitalist system is also the basic unit of reproduction and transformation of the dominant ideology" (quoted in Oppenheimer, 1998: 252). Bingo! The political justification Marcos was striving for comes from Marxism— indeed, in his thesis he drew extensively upon Marxist theory, especially the structuralist Marxism of Luis Althusser— and thus my argument has come full circle: Marxism, a central accoutrement in the Ariel-Caliban repertoire, is the theory that provides political justifications for the immoral tendencies of psychologically troubled individuals; or, phrased otherwise, Marxism is pathologised as the theory of the psychologically troubled. Of course, one must take umbrage with another of Oppenheimer's arbitrary, verging on chimerical, causal connections between Marxism and breaking with one's own family, for a Marxist critique does not necessarily entail a breaking with one's family— but, alas, Oppenheimer seems indifferent to such details.

Let's continue to move forward, and more closely examine the very meaning of the phrase 'psychologically troubled', employed by Oppenheimer. Whilst, indeed, family constellation theories do contain the seed of psychologisation of the middle-borns (e.g. as having lower IQ), they do not tend to speak of the middle-borns as being 'psychologically

⁴ Rafael Guillén was Marcos's name by birth.

troubled', but, rather, as displaying different characteristics from either first-borns or last-borns. Even when assessed in terms of the 'Big five' personality dimensions (i.e. Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience), and taking into consideration the fact that middle-borns are said to score differently in four of the five, the differences are not directly or explicitly described as demonstrating a 'psychological problem'. And, moreover, in the fifth dimension (namely, neuroticism), in which a high score could justify— at least, within mainstream culture— the term 'psychologically troubled', there are no significant birth-order effects (see Sulloway, 2007).⁵ Why, then, does Oppenheimer employ such a term? This is merely a rhetorical question, for Oppenheimer's intentions are of no interest to our discussion. What is of interest is the fact that Oppenheimer's reference to family constellation theories inevitably brings to mind the best known work on birth-order effects, Frank Sulloway's (1996) *Born to be Rebel*. Within this work, Sulloway purports that middle-borns and last-borns are more likely to be the 'rebel of the family' than the first-borns, citing a number of revolutionaries who fit this pattern (e.g. Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Fidel Castro, etc.). In other words, what Oppenheimer characterises as 'psychological trouble' is nothing other than rebelliousness— once again associated with Marxist revolutionary politics.

Psychologisation II: the brilliant myth

If family constellation theories have been selectively used and manipulated by those hostile to the Zapatista project, so as to render Marxism the problematic theory behind the Ariel-Caliban repertoire, they have also been employed by pro-Zapatista authors with no less anti-revolutionary implications. For example, in his otherwise meticulous biography of Marcos, Henck (2007) draws upon family constellation theories— as if these theories present us with facts independent from politics— in order to 'explain' Marcos's trajectory. Despite the fact that Henck takes into account the social and political conditions in Marcos's intellectual and political trajectory, such conditions are considered somewhat inadequate unless supplemented by psychosocial structural explanations. Presenting the family constellation theories in the beginning of his book, Henck appears to suggest that Marcos was simply *conditioned* to become a revolutionary. Henck references Sulloway's

⁵ I do not mean to imply here that family constellation theories describe psychosocial facts. The reason I review "evidence" from these relevant research is in order to show that even when assessed against these theories Oppenheimer's assertions remain arbitrary and badly founded.

theory, particularly those parts that emphasise that later-borns are more likely to become revolutionaries and challenge the established order, thus attributing their radicalism, “not to class consciousness”, but, rather, to competition for limited family resources (quoted in Henck, 2007: 16) . Here, psychologising is once again targeting, not simply Marcos, but Marxism. Henck, then, concludes that “Rafael, as we will see, conforms to this revolutionary elite pattern on every count” (2007: 17). Henck’s approach inscribes in the radical political field a strong anti-egalitarian statement. For if Marcos is an elite revolutionary predestined by some psychosocial determinations to rebel, then all other militants and, indeed, the indigenous populations themselves, are nothing but predestined *not* to rebel or at least to follow him in his rebellion—I will expound upon this in due course in relation to Naomi Klein’s accounts of Marcos. The Ariel-Caliban relationship, then, is sliding back to Che Guevara’s— who, interestingly, was a first-born— and Mario Payera’s representations of the intellectuals as leading to progress the pre-modern, underdeveloped peasants and indigenous— a relationship strongly opposed by the Zapatistas. In his account of Marcos’s life and relation to the indigenous populations, Henck reproduces throughout his treatise mainstream bourgeois psychological explanations based upon Marcos’s ‘personality’— instead of, for example, seeing Marcos’s relationship with the indigenous as a socio-politically constituted relational dynamic—explanations that, ultimately, run against the egalitarian politics he adheres to.⁶

This psychologisation of Marcos goes far beyond his pathologisation and the reactionary re-organisation of the Ariel-Caliban relationship: it goes as far as psychologising all those outside the organicity of this relationship who are in solidarity with the Zapatista struggle. What many-pro-Zapatista commentators and analysts have done is allow psychology to walk into politics and claim a share in the explanation of the events— explanations which attempt to re-establish order and control. It is this which I will discuss in greater detail for the remainder of this section. Let’s return to the anti-Zapatista psychologists of the state. Constructing the psychological profile of Marcos, Anaconda (1994) makes the following important profiling statement: “[Marcos’s] calculations of ambition predominate over material necessities arriving to the point of showing indifference to eating and sexual pleasures” (p.22-23). Here, the commitment, discipline, austerity, organisation, and management of resources, and so on, which are endemic to the radical form of the Ariel-Caliban repertoire and any revolutionary struggle (see Badiou, 2009), are displaced to a reduced form of indifference to sexual and gastronomic pleasures, reminiscent

⁶ Nick Henck has objected that in his work he introduces Sulloway’s theory tentatively, and that my reading misrepresents his overall argument. In the light of this comment, I present my argument here only as a possible reading, among others, that could derive from his argument. .

of forms of asceticism associated in Mexico with catholic saints. However, in contradistinction to the saints, in the above account Marcos fasts and practices celibacy not to achieve god, but to attain his mundane personal ambitions; he is, in other words, a false saint or even a false hero, who instead of fighting for his people, fights for his own personal interests. This is where leftist pro-Marcos sympathisers enter the picture, attempting to counter this image of Marcos with an equally anti-revolutionary emphasis upon the latter's 'sublime' qualities. Whereas the anti-Zapatistas reproduce the bourgeois divided self in order to pathologise the private aspect of it, the pro-Zapatistas reproduce a version of a humanistic, unified and actualised selfhood (of the great man). For leftists of this persuasion, Marcos is a real hero and an authentic saint. Here is Naomi Klein's account of Marcos:

This masked man who calls himself Marcos is the descendant of King, Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Emiliano Zapata and all other heroes who preached from pulpits only to be shot down one by one, leaving bodies of followers wandering around blind and disoriented because they lost their heads (2001:14).

Note that Klein's heroes who were shot down 'preach from pulpits', as does Marcos—albeit in riddles rather than in certainties; he is a postmodern persona after all. Preaching, however, is not something revolutionaries do: preaching belongs to the world of priests, prophets, saints, and martyrs. Moreover, the pulpit is not a revolutionary apparatus like the AK-47 is for the guerrilla group, but, rather, a structure or an elevated piece of furniture in the Churches where a member of the clergy stands and reads the gospel (the San Marcos gospel?). One can patently recognise, here, the intermingling of two closely related discourses: heroism, and saintliness — which I will henceforth classify as a single discourse.⁷ As Gómez Peña writes:

Many of Marcos's hard-core sympathisers are trying to figure out a dignified exit for the hero. Should he take off the mask in private, go back to his normal self, and disappear for good? Should he commit political suicide or die in time to conquer a space in the Mexican Revolutionary Olympus...(1995: 95).

⁷ I treat here the discourses of heroism and saintliness as a single discourse for they function in almost identical ways in relation to psychologisation and within consumerist societies. The hero is first and foremost a military man, and, as Sartre (1988 [1952] tells us, the Christian legacy is full of examples of men who made the transition from a military hierarchy to saintliness (e.g. Saint George, Saint Ignatius, Saint Martin etc).

In an article appearing firstly in the Mexican daily *La Jornada*, shortly after the National Democratic Convention (CND) organised by the Zapatistas in the Lacandon Jungle in August 1994, Elena Poniatowska— a renowned Mexican Leftist intellectual— refers to the subcomandante as “that man that has a god inside, and whose name is Marcos” (1994: 324). And, after all, who has a god inside, if not the semi-deified hero, the saint, the holy man, the one who inhabits the border between humanity and the sacred? Both Klein’s and Poniatowska’s respective accounts are archetypal examples of psychologisation, even if, at first glance, they do not appear as such. There are several avenues one can explore here to elucidate this. The first avenue is an equally complex and protracted affair; henceforth, the following précis is by no means exhaustive. We know from Sartre (1988/1952) that the hero and the saint are prominent figures within consumer societies, and, as such, are inconceivable without the luxury and myths of these societies. Both figures exist somehow outside society, albeit in relation to it, and for it. Heroism and saintliness also serve a specific function within ‘post-modern’ consumerist culture, with the latter also closely related to psychologisation in various ways; consumerism, for example, is often framed in therapeutic terms, such as in the expression ‘shopping therapy’, etc. The hero and the saint would, then, constitute clear examples of what one may denote ‘hyper-psychologisation’— the condensing of society’s most valued psychological properties into categories not explicitly psychological; categories which serve to maintain and perpetuate consumerism. A terser approach would be to dismiss any understanding of these discourses as somehow preceding the development of bourgeois psychology. If these two decidedly interrelated discourses make absolute sense, it is precisely because they refer, albeit implicitly, to familiar psychologised layers of reality. This means that the hero and the saint again function as hyper-psychologised categories for particular, socially defined, positive psychological qualities and attributes. Therefore, when Poniatowska states that Marcos ‘has a god inside’ or when Klein presents Marcos as a ‘hero’, we, in turn, ‘read’ into or extrapolate from these categories a person who has a ‘strong and composed personality’, ‘knowledge’, ‘developed linguistic skills’, is ‘talented’, ‘charismatic’, ‘intelligent’, ‘altruistic’, ‘empathic’, and so on and so forth. The discourse of heroism and saintliness is thus a discourse that allows psychology to enter politics through the backdoor, with Marcos presented as an idealised version of a postmodern (‘teaching in riddles?!) psy-therapist, whose death would result in ‘bodies of followers wandering around blind and disorientated’.

One could, of course, object at this juncture and suggest that the preceding analysis is just another arbitrary reading and that, in actuality, there is no *explicit* reference to psychology whatsoever. A more sophisticated mind would go even further, perhaps arguing that it is, in fact, precisely my own reading which psychologises the whole affair: both, by making it explicit, and through establishing connections between the hero/saint and psychological properties. And these would be fair arguments if it were not the Mexican bour-

geois psychologists themselves psychologising all this before me. So, if I psychologise the above accounts on Marcos— which I unquestionably do— it is not in order to elucidate these accounts by revealing their hidden nature, but in order to present the logic that allows psychology, with great ease, to enter the political sphere and claim a share of the events. What I am performing is a tactical psychologising in order to capture what the construction of Marcos as a brilliant myth may imply for psychology, and see where the latter will be able to insert itself in order to attempt to establish order. Perhaps after such a lengthy excursus the reader has forgotten what I set out to do here: to demonstrate how all this is, in the end, turned against all those who would support and show solidarity for the Zapatistas and, *mutatis mutandis*, any other radical movement. So, let me conclude my argument. By depicting Marcos in heroic and semi-sacred terms (hyper-psychological terms), Klein, Poniatowska, and many other pro-Marcos supporters allow bourgeois and state psychology to attain a grip upon all those who show solidarity to the indigenous struggle, through the use of a single word: ‘PROJECTION’. The Mexican bourgeois psychologist Anaconda, responding to what he perceived as a pro-Marcos frenzy in Mexico and abroad from the very first days of the Zapatista rebellion, would include a long paragraph on projection, in turn, preparing the terrain for the pathologisation of solidarity:

“...in this case projection is personalised in leaders or a group of leaders to whom the person comes close or affiliates herself with voluntarily looking for somebody to depend on or hoping to find security. In this case, projection results in the need to endow the leaders with elements of omnipotence and dress them with absolute positive aspects...and seeing them as superhuman beings...” (1994:19).

Taking the above quote into consideration, supporters of radical politics, then, can be presented as suffering from dependency or emotional insecurity. Revolutionary politics thus collapses once again into some kind of psychological malfunction— one should remember, here, prior references to the Zapatista sympathisers as suffering from ‘political immaturity’. Here, immaturity is conceptualised in psy-terms as feelings of dependency and insecurity, resulting in projection; thus, the relationship between Marcos and his emotionally insecure and dependent ‘followers’ is again constructed as a therapeutic one. To put it simply, relations of solidarity are reduced to, or explained away in terms of, projection.

...and back

In his discussion on pan-psychologisation, De Vos (2008) distinguishes between psychologising and psychologisation, arguing that “formerly, psychologising was the way to depoliticise social antagonisms; currently psychologisation is linked to a *de facto* depolitic-

sation. Psychologising was about making the socio-economic and political aspects invisible; psychologisation is about making itself invisible" (p 10-11). The problem with De Vos's argument, as I see it, is that the distinction he makes implies that psychologising—as the depoliticisation of social and political antagonisms—is no longer necessary because psychology has achieved an "all embracing and even totalitarian grip on the human being" (2008: p.6). When De Vos becomes uncertain of this distinction, it is on the basis that the distinction gives the wrong impression of two distinct historical times (2010). The problem with his distinction, however, is not the wrong periodisation of history it might imply, but the unconvincing claim that psychologisation is linked to a *de facto* depoliticisation, and, as such, is no longer necessary; as he puts it: "there is nothing to de-politicise, politics has left the building" (2010). This is, however, a rather restricted view of politics, one that prioritises capital's tactics of simulation over resistance. For De Vos, psychologisation is not a process that de-politicises—for to depoliticise would mean that there is still politics, a claim he considers invalid—but, on the contrary, a process that continuously re-establishes itself through an on-going psychologisation discourse. By seeing things from the perspective of a putative *de facto* depoliticisation, De Vos consequently understands psychologisation as an 'order of things', a total and completed state, and an all encompassing grip on all aspects of life.⁸ Against De Vos's view, of the discourse of psychology having colonised all aspects of life, in turn, depriving them of any possibility of being identified without reference to this discourse, I insist on conceptualising psychologisation—at least in one of its most dominant dimensions—in a more traditional schema: as a process rather than a state—as Holloway (2002), for example, has shown in relation to commodity fetishism. Conceptualising it as a process means that there is always something that escapes psychologisation: that there is resistance, and resistance *is* politics, even when, on occasion, it is mixed with pseudo-psychological jargon. Thus, psychologisation needs to perform continuous operations, not only in order to simply re-establish itself—to make itself present—but also in order to depoliticise and colonise actions that escape it.

This is not to deny psychology's grip over many aspects of reality, nor to suggest that De Vos is, even to a certain extent, correct when arguing that there is no authentic, real life outside psychologisation. In radical politics, however, things are different: radical political discourses and practices require no reference to psychology, and they exist outside psychologisation, and against it—even when psy-language is sometimes employed. It is

⁸ To this De Vos has objected that I take his argument too far and that he does not see psychologisation as an omnipotent state. On the contrary, he argues, we need a 'proper politics' beyond psychology(-isation). In the light of this objection I present my arguments in this article as only a reading that could derive from his work.

when a guerrilla group engages in armed struggle and talks of communism, or when people take to the streets to riot against the government, that liberal analysts employ social psychological frustration-aggression models to understand what is going on, and bourgeois psychologists clamour to attach labels of aggressive and paranoid personalities.⁹ This demonstrates lucidly how psychology is a continuous control operation of the constituted power. Or, phrased otherwise, psychologisation remains the process, in one of its dimensions, by which psychology attempts, not to gain an absolute grip upon radical political discourses and radical repertoires of political action— this is impossible for reasons related to the social ontology of politics proper— but to temporarily tame its force, control it, and re-establish order. Let's see another example: Engaging with the Ariel-Caliban repertoire in its radical version means that one aims at the production of an 'event', a revolt, or a revolution – in Negri's (1999) conception of an 'event' as being induced by conscious 'pre-evental' efforts on the behalf of subjects rather than Badiou's (2002). Moreover, the event is constituent power and contains no certainty for its participants, whilst demanding, in turn, a risky commitment and dedication. As Marcos once commented, in reference to the Zapatista revolt of 1 January 1994:

We were many those of us who burnt our vessels that dawn of 1 January 1994 and we took up that heavy gait covering our face with a balaclava. We were many those of us who made that step with no return (quoted in Anaconda, 1994: 20).

Categorising the above statement, the Mexican psy-expert Anaconda (1994) includes it under the subtitle: "depressive thoughts" (p.20). There is no *de facto* depoliticisation here; rather, it is the radical political nature of Marcos's statement that the psy-expert responds to in order to contain its revolutionary spirit, and present it as a psy-malfunction that needs to be treated. Her unsuccessful, verging on ridiculous, attempt demonstrates unequivocally that radical politics can never be brought under the total grip of psychologisation.

De Vos's total approach to psychologisation as an 'order of things', is based, to a certain extent, on the lack of a clear distinction between politics proper and politics as regulation, or administration, and it is this lack of a clear distinction that makes him see psychologisation as a *de facto* depoliticisation. What De Vos calls *de facto* depoliticisation is nothing but continuous operations of regulation and administration based upon psycholog-

⁹ It is indicative that during the mobilisations in Athens and other Greek cities in 2008, a psychology lecturer claimed during his lecture that it was highly probable that those who engaged in acts of violence were suffering from ADHD and had not been diagnosed. ADHD, the lecturer continued, if not diagnosed in an early age almost certainly results in delinquent behaviour. It was a clear de-politicisation of the events.

ical discourse. But this hardly stands for a *de facto* depoliticisation. We should note that it is hardly accurate to say that psychology depoliticises, for this gives the impression that the political field and the psychological field are two different domains. Rather than seeing the relationship between the two as an external one, psychologisation should be approached as a process *within* the political; psychologisation is thus one of the processes by which constituted power attempts to block and cancel radical political interventions that threaten its order. When De Vos (2010) observes that 'psychologisation is politics already', as shown in the 'marriage de raison between psychology and policy makers' (personal communication) — despite the fact that, again, there is a lack of distinction between regulation and administration on the one hand, and politics proper on the other— he implicitly recognises that in order to understand what psychologisation does, or even for psychology to understand itself, we must employ a discourse of politics, a discourse that exists outside psychology. This makes it abundantly clear that the 'pan-psychologisation' he stands for is simply a witty exaggeration. In fact, it is an open question whether we should talk of the psychologisation of politics, instead of the political *uses* of psychology.

The climate of pan-psychologisation he produces, forces De Vos to look for messianic— almost totalitarian— solutions to the problem:

Maybe instead of an Agambian inspired *other use* of Academia...we should opt for a more radical attempt to break the hegemony of Academia and suffocation of other discourses. Instead of promoting and out-of-the state, we perhaps must readopt the old idea of seizing the state structures. The only way then to make the state structures usable in an emancipatory project would then be to get the academics out, pretty much in the same way as the merchants and the Pharisees were thrown out of the temple (2010 unpublished paper, p.20).

Notwithstanding my own sympathies with De Vos's anti-academism, the problem in the above quotation concerns who is this 'we' he refers to? By we, is he referring to the 'good academics', the ones who, perhaps, with the help of some radical workers are going to seize state power and kick the 'bad academics' out? From what position are 'we' going to do this: that of the oppressed; of the enlightened; of the politicised subjects who bring freedom to the psychologised ones? De Vos's politics, here, are, at best, messianic. The metaphor he employs is indicative, for the merchants and the Pharisees were thrown out of the temple, neither by an invisible hand nor by a group of anarcho-syndicalists who occupied the Solomon's temple, but, rather, by the very man who claimed authority and patriarchal spiritual rights over the temple, and who bore the title 'messiah'. When it comes to politics, however, the word 'messiah' is a hyper-psychologised category— as noted previously in relation to the saint and the hero. Furthermore, forcing academics out does not mean that psychologisation will disappear; it only means that it will pass to

another level of operation, similar to magic, astrology and religion— operations whose existence do not require the existence of the academy.

To conclude, instead of dreaming of storming the academic ‘winter palace’, we should work towards a different kind of psychology. If psychology and psychologisation, in their present form, are processes of regulation and administration of the constituted power and depoliticisation of resistance, the task is, then, to take it on and work for a kind of psychology that de-psychologises itself and aligns with radical politics. This will not be an alternative psychology, nor will it be a new radical discipline; on the contrary, it will be revolutionary psychology as a process, as a radical repertoire of action that aims at the disappearance of psychology in its present form. Where such effort is going to lead is impossible to say. Taking on psychology in its present form, however, can bring us closer, not simply to the de-academisation of life, as suggested by De Vos, but also to the very destruction of certain state structures or the disengagement of aspects of life from the state and psy-sciences’s grip. Even though Parker’s (1996) ‘biographic’ revolutionary psychology runs many of the risks I discussed vis-à-vis Naomi Klein’s and Elena Poniatowska’s accounts of Marcos, his transitional demands for taking on psychology are heading in the right direction (see Parker, 2007).

References

- Anaconda, A. (1994) ‘El Subcomandante Marcos; Varias Voces, un Sólo Pasamontañas’. In *Epoca*, 21 February, 1994, pp. 18-20.
- Badiou, A. (2009) *Logics of worlds: Being and Event II*. London: Continuum.
- Badiou, A. (2001) *Ethics: an Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. London: Verso.
- Castro, F (1961) ‘Speech to the Intellectuals on 30 June 1961’. In <http://www1.lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1961/19610630.html> (retrieved 12 November 2009)
- De Vos, J. (2008) ‘From Panopticon to Pan-psychologisation’. *International Journal of Žižek Studies* 2(1) <http://www.zizekstudies.org/index.php/ijzs/article/view/48/151> (accessed 25 March 2010).
- De Vos, J (2010) ‘Psychologisation in Times of Globalisation : Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* as the *Homo Psychologicus*’. *Unpublished Paper*.
- Gómez Peña, G (1995) ‘the Subcomandante of Performance’. In Katzenberger, E. (ed.) *First World Ha Ha Ha!*, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995, pp.89-98.
- Henck, N. (2007) *Subcomandante Marcos: the Man and the Mask*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hernández Landa Garcia, O. (1994) ‘Retrato Psicológico de una Sombra: Quien es Marcos?’. *Epoca: Semanario de Mexico*, No. 142, pp. 18-23, 21 February 1994.
- Holloway, J (2002) *Change the World without Taking Power*. London: Pluto Press.
- Federici, S. (2004) *Caliban and The Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Autonomedia.

- Fernández Retamar, R, 'Caliban: Notes Towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America'. In *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1/2, Winter 1974, pp.7-72. Available on-line in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25088398> (accessed 18 August 2009).
- Klein, N. (2001) 'The Unknown Icon'. *The Guardian Weekend*, March 3, 2001, pp. 9-14.
- Marx, K and Engels, F (1848) 'the Manifesto of the communist Party'. In <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm> (accessed 23 March 2010)
- Mentinis, M (2006) *Zapatistas: the Chiapas Revolt and what it means for Radical Politics*. London: Pluto press.
- Miller, N. (1999) *In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals in the quest for National Identity in twentieth-Century Spanish America*, London: Verso.
- Montaner, C. A. (2001) 'Marcos, la Mascara y los Idiotas sin Fronteras', <http://www.firmaspress.com/115.htm> (accessed 27 November 2006).
- Negri, A. (1999) *Insurgencias: Constituent Power and the Modern State*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Oppenheimer, A. (1998 [1996]) *Bordering on Chaos: Mexico's Roller-Coaster Journey towards Prosperity*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- O'Toole, M. 'Shakespeare's Natives: Ariel and Caliban in the Tempest'. In <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/lithum/gallo/tempest.html> (accessed 23 March 2010).
- Parker, I. (1996) 'the revolutionary Psychology of Lev Davidovich Bronstein', In Parker, I. and Spears, R. (eds) *Psychology and Society: Radical Theory and Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 1996, pp. 184-194.
- Parker, I. (2008) 'Micro-nations of the Self in Times of War: Against Discourse Analysis in Psychology', *Turkish Psychological Association Annual Conference*, Istanbul, September 2008.
- Parker (2007) *Revolution in Psychology: alienation to Emancipation*. London: Pluto Press.
- Poniatowska, E. (1994) 'La CND: de Naves Mayores a Menores'. In *EZLN Documentos y comunicados*, vol. 1, pp.324-328. Mexico D.F.: Ediciones Era. [Originally from *La Jornada*, 16 August 1994.
- Sartre, J P. (1988 [1952]) *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*. London: Heinemann.
- Saldaña Portillo, M. J, 2003, *the Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Santamaría, A. (1998) Marcos: autoafirmación narcisista (interview given to Rafael Aceituno), *Siempre!* Vol. 45, pp28-32, July 16, 1998.
- Shah-Shuja (2008) *Zones of Proletarian Development*. London: Open Mute.
- Shah shuja (2010) 'The simultaneous suppression and realisation of identity and subjectivity during radical street performance'. *Unpublished manuscript*. Stabb, S. M (1994) *the dissenting Voice: The New Essay of Spanish America, 1960s-1985*, Austin, University of Texas Press.
- Subcomandante Marcos (1994) 'Interview given to Michael McCaughan' <http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst?docId=98486396> (accessed 24 March 2010).
- Sulloway, F. J (2007) 'Birth order and sibling competition'. In Dunbar, R and Barrett, L (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University press, pp.297-311.
- Sulloway, F. J (1996) *Born to rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics and Creative Lives*. New York: Pantheon.

About the author:

Mihalis Mentinis is a lecturer in social psychology and qualitative research methods at the university of Crete.

Contact: mmentinis@psy.soc.uoc.gr